

BROADCASTING

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U.S. outlets answer Cuban propaganda

COMMITTEE'S PROGRAMS REACH AS FAR SOUTH AS ARGENTINA

"Sin libertad la vida nada vale"—without liberty life is worth nothing. This message, heard daily over WGBS Miami, WKWF Key West and WWL New Orleans, signals the start of Spanish-language programs that constitute what is probably an unprecedented effort involving U. S. broadcasters to rebut Communist propaganda emanating from Cuba.

Technically, the broadcasts—filled with news of Cuba and Latin America, commentary, interviews with Cuban refugees and Spanish music—are intended for the very considerable Spanish-speaking audience in those stations' service areas. And the heavy volume of mail the stations get from mainland listeners indicates the programs are providing a valued service.

But because of the stations' proximity to the Caribbean area and their power—WWL operates on 50 kw; WGBS, 10 kw at night, when it carries the programs; and WKWF, 500 watts—the broadcasts are heard throughout Latin America as far south as Argentina.

Cuban Freedom Committee. • This is what concerns the Cuban Freedom Committee, a small group of American citizens who buy the time for the programs and provide the professional staff—composed of Cuban refugees with broadcast experience—to put them on the air.

Rep. Roman Pucinski (D Ill.), one of the founders of the committee and a member of its advisory board, sees the special programming as a unique effort to break through the "Castro curtain" and provide the Cuban people with the "unadulterated truth."

Committee staffers are assigned to each of the stations carrying the broadcasts. Much of their material is provided by the committee's office in Washington, but the most important part of the broadcasts is straight news, prepared from the AP and UPI news teletype machines. "The

Cubans don't really know what's really going on in their country," Rep. Pucinski says. Refugees are interviewed soon after their arrival in Miami, Key West or New Orleans, and replies to Castro propaganda blasts are put on the air promptly, sometimes while the Cuban leader is still in the midst of a marathon speech. But no effort is made to incite the Cuban people to revolt.

The three U. S. stations themselves are enthusiastic about the programming. They say the mail response from listeners in this country and Latin America, including Cuba,



Mrs. Mariada C. Arensberg, executive secretary of the Cuban Freedom Committee helps carry out the committee's programming policies from Washington.

has been gratifying. The stations have even been praised for "imaginative public service programming."

Radio Americas. • Actually, four U. S. stations are carrying the committee's broadcasts. The fourth—

and the first one used by the committee—is Radio Americas, a 50,000-watt station on U. S.-claimed Swan Island, off the coast of Honduras. This station, previously known as Radio SWAN, achieved notoriety during the abortive Cuban invasion last year when it was widely reported as being a Central Intelligence Agency cover operation.

Since then, the station has changed hands. The owner of record had been Gibraltar Steamship Co. It's now Vanguard Co., of Miami, Fla. But FCC officials, who say the station is not licensed by the commission, are still reluctant to talk about it.

The Cuban Freedom Committee, and its vest-pocket version of the Radio Free Europe operation, is largely the brainchild of Rep. Pucinski, who began speaking of the need for such a program almost two years ago. He said then that Cubans were being "brainwashed with the most bitter hate-America campaign ever staged" and that there was an immediate need for a "counterforce which will tell our traditional allies and friends in Cuba the truth about Castro."

People-to-People. • He felt then—and still does—that an organization of U. S. private citizens would, by its very nature, have a value denied a government agency, such as the Voice of America. He also saw an advantage in medium-wave broadcasts, since Cuba is believed to have the highest per-capita ownership of standard am receivers in any country outside the U. S. The VOA broadcasts shortwave programs to Latin America, too.

Rep. Pucinski originally asked Radio Free Europe to undertake the mission. But RFE officials said their hands were full in Europe; that they feared the East Europeans would feel the U. S. was losing interest in them if the organization opened a

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